

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 108

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to recognize Shirlene Mercer for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this body should honor those estimable citizens who have performed their duties with the utmost probity, and whose efforts throughout their years of public service have been dedicated to providing thoughtful and exemplary service to the citizens of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding citizen who has served with honor and distinction during her long career in public service is Shirlene Mercer of Jackson who has recently taken a much deserved retirement from her post as Director of District Services for Congressman John Tanner after twenty years of meritorious service to the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, rightfully acknowledged as a living legend in her community, Shirlene Mercer has a lengthy record as a civic activist, from fighting for civil rights in the 1960s to leading marches against crime in neighborhoods across Jackson that have included numerous dignitaries and prominent officials such as Vice President Al Gore, Governor Don Sundquist, Governor Phil Bredesen, Senator Bill Frist, Congressman Harold Ford, Jr., and former NAACP Director Dr. Benjamin Hooks; and

WHEREAS, born in Jackson, Tennessee, Shirlene Mercer attended local public schools and is a graduate of Merry High School and Lane College; she completed her graduate work at the University of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, formerly a professional educator and active in the Tennessee Education Association, Shirlene Mercer served as a public school teacher for nearly twenty-five years,

working until the end of the 1989-1990 school year for the Hardeman County School System in Bolivar; and

WHEREAS, joining Congressman Tanner's staff in 1988, she has assisted untold thousands of individual constituents while also continuing her inspirational grassroots projects and programs to aid both the local community and the good people of Tennessee, including her weekly "Anti-Crime March" on Friday of every week when she and a band of interested children and adults marched into the streets of Jackson, walking to crime-troubled neighborhoods in a public display against violence; and

WHEREAS, an acclaimed public speaker who has made appearances across the nation, Shirlene Mercer has addressed the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Crime Prevention Council, and the Tennessee Associations of Parks and Recreation in addition to presentations to students at the University of Tennessee, Jackson State Community College, and former Vice President Al Gore's classes at Fisk University and Middle Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, her fervent belief that people should be treated equally, that everyone's voice matters, combined with an innate ability to bring people together, led Mrs. Mercer to a life of public service, and always, she has been an agent of change; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Shirlene Mercer has received the E. Harper Johnson Award from the Tennessee Education Association, the Liberty Bell Award from the Tennessee Bar Association, the Community Leadership Award from the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the City of Jackson's Community Service Award, and the Jean Harris Award from Rotary International; and

WHEREAS, named "Woman of the Year" in 1994 by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, she has been inducted into the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Community Affairs Hall of Fame and was recently awarded the Living Legends Award by the Jackson Chapter of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, she is a longtime member of Greater St. Luke Baptist Church, which she has faithfully served as church secretary for more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, her many civic and professional accomplishments aside, Shirlene Mercer is most appreciative of the love and companionship she shares with her husband, Luther Mercer,

a Madison County Commissioner, and their two children, LaTina Mercer and Luther Mercer II;
and

WHEREAS, Shirlene Mercer is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized for her distinguished record of service; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Mrs. Mercer has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her community and her fellow citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Shirlene Mercer for her many valuable contributions to her community as a devoted public servant and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction. As she steps down from her post as Director of District Services for Congressman John Tanner, we extend to her our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, along with every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.